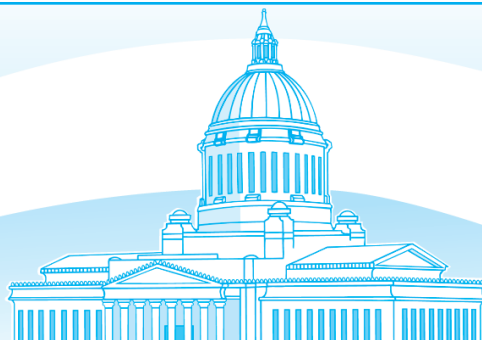


Senator Mike Hewitt



2003 Legislative Report • 16th District

Keep in Touch

Olympia office:

115-B Irving R.
Newhouse Building

Mailing address:

P.O. Box 40416
Olympia, WA 98504-0416

Phone: 1-360-786-7630

E-mail:

hewitt_mi@leg.wa.gov

Toll-free Legislative

Hotline: 1-800-562-6000

TTY: 1-800-635-9993

Internet Information:

- www.leg.wa.gov
- www.src.wa.gov
- www.src.wa.gov/members/hewitt.htm

Committees:

- Commerce and Trade,
vice chair
- Natural Resources,
Energy and Water,
vice chair
- Ways and Means,
vice chair
- Rules

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

During this budget year, we've had to make some tough decisions about our state's priorities when it comes to taxing, spending, and cutting or expanding programs. We've worked hard to make sure we protect our most vulnerable citizens and help the economy. I think we've done that, and in the following newsletter I'll go over some of the highlights of this legislative session.

In addition, this newsletter will cover some transportation issues, including the 5-cent gas tax and bills we needed to improve the economy and increase the number of jobs available.

More than anything, we want to create solid programs that will help you. After all, the citizens of Washington are the reason we come to Olympia each year. We know you are concerned about jobs, the economy, health care, your children's education and the future of your families. As an elected official, I've worked hard to make sure these concerns are addressed and that your best interest is served. We're working hard in the Senate to help boost the economy and attract new businesses to our state.

As your senator, I represent you and want to hear your comments and suggestions. Feel free to contact my office in Olympia directly at 1-360-786-7630, or via the toll-free legislative hotline at 1-800-562-6000.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mike Hewitt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Mike Hewitt
16th District Senator

Federal "Do Not Call List" is now available

The Federal Trade Commission (the nation's consumer protection agency) will begin enforcing the National Do Not Call Registry on Oct. 1, 2003. That's when consumers who put their numbers on the registry by August 31, 2003 will notice a downturn in the number of telemarketing calls they get. Placing your number on the National Do Not Call Registry will stop most, but not all, telemarketing calls. Non-profits and charities may continue to call. In addition, any business that has a relationship with you may continue to call, i.e. credit card companies may call to upgrade your card. For more information call 1-888-382-1222 or visit the Federal Trade Commission's Web site at:

<http://www.donotcall.gov>



Balancing a budget without taxes



One of my top priorities, along with many others in the Senate, was to create a balanced budget without any new tax increase on the general public. Our neighbors, friends and families are all struggling in a sluggish economy. Everyone knows of at least one person who

has lost his or her job. A general tax increase would have devastated the economy.

I'm proud to announce we did exactly what we set out to do at the beginning of session—no new taxes. The Legislature passed a balanced budget that protects the most vulnerable citizens, and we did it without asking for more money.

Several other budget proposals cut funding to state human services, such as services to the developmentally disabled and troubled youth. We stuck to our principles to protect these services, and we did.

In addition, we were able to provide funding for our schools. Teachers who have been teaching for seven years or less will receive a pay raise. With this budget, beginning teachers will make at least \$30,000 a year. Class size funding was also restored to the budget, allowing children to receive the best education possible.

Finally, there has been much discussion about the home health care workers. These dedicated individuals provide an invaluable service in our community. Because of various issues with the negotiated contract, the Legislature ultimately rejected it. However, it was important to provide a pay raise to homecare workers. The Legislature will provide a 75-cent pay increase for all union and non-union home care workers in the state.

Trying to Improve the Economy

Right after the elections last year when we knew we had control of the Senate, Republican Senate leadership met together to outline our goals. Those goals included:

- Moving the economy forward
- Balancing the state budgets without any new taxes
- Ending the Legislative session on time

Our efforts were impeded by the House who refused to hear many important Senate bills in the House committees. To top that, the House proposed an operating budget that increased taxes by \$360 million. They did this on the day prior to the end of session leaving us with no time for negotiations. Their postponed budget release forced us into a special session.

Three key bills that I sponsored would have improved the economy and helped stabilize businesses in Southeastern Washington. Unfortunately, they were all stopped in the House. Senate Bill 5697 alleviated the business burden from Washington's increasing minimum wage by linking minimum wage to our unemployment rate. If our unemployment rate were higher than the national unemployment rate, the indexed minimum wage would be suspended. However, if our unemployment rate dropped below the national average, it would trigger the index growth again. The benefit would be if the state's economy were doing well, then our minimum wage goes up; however, if our economy slows down, this bill would allow provisions to give relief to state businesses and the agricultural communities.

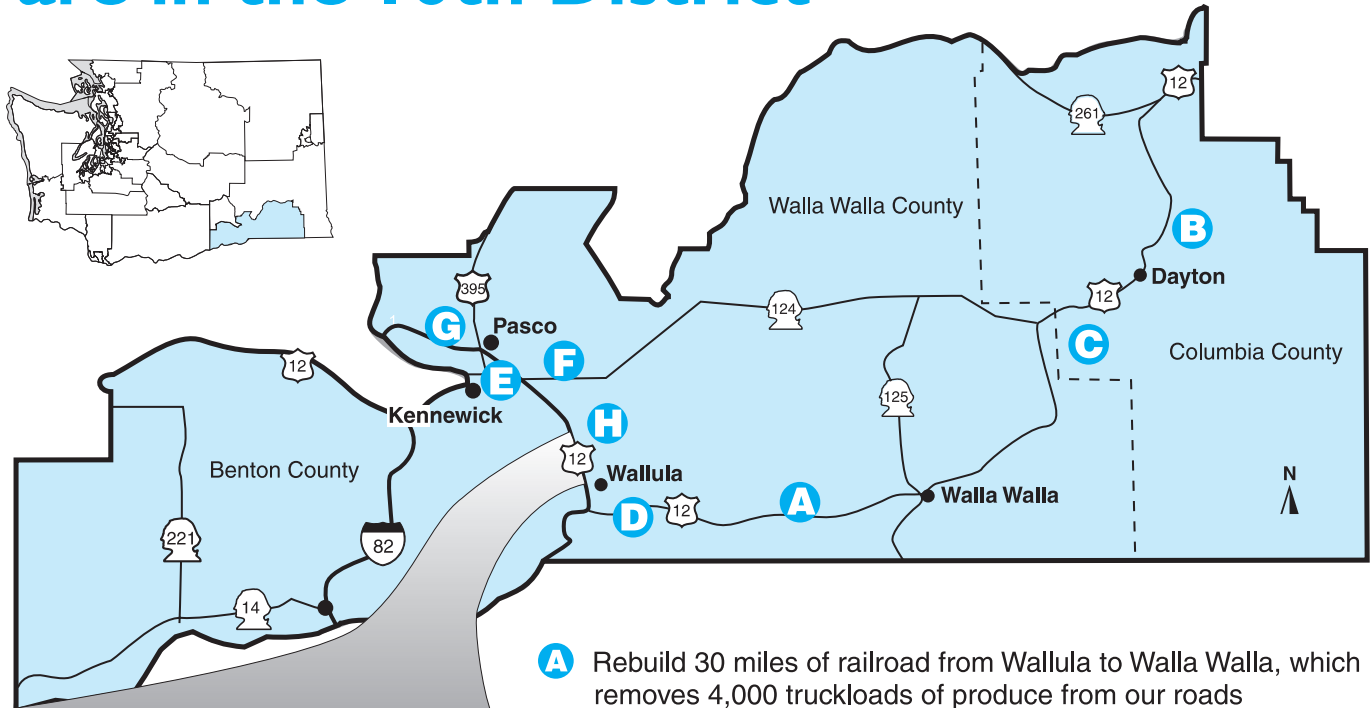
In May 2000, L&I developed its ergonomics rule. Senate Bill 5161 removed the onerous regulations L&I was prepared to force onto state businesses. Instead, we made the rule voluntary, forcing L&I to provide assistance to businesses that would like to implement an ergonomics program.

Finally, as part of a larger water reform package, I proposed Senate Bill 5106. Currently under Ecology rules, farmers and other water rights holders must use their annual allocated water consumption or risk losing it the following year. This compliance rule encourages people to waste water in order for them to have it available in the future. I firmly believe one of our most valuable resources shouldn't be wasted just because of some state agency rule. SB 5106 would have allowed water rights holders to receive credit for unused water and apply it to future usage.

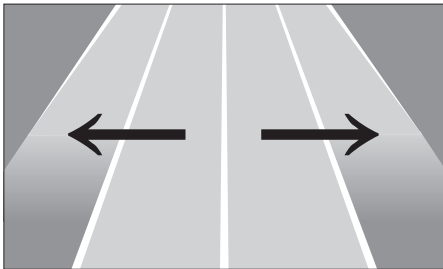


Sen. Hewitt meeting with Pasco high school students in Olympia.

Several great transportation projects are in the 16th District



H Two lanes will become four lanes



Highway 12 from mile post 295 to 298 and 303 to 307.

- A** Rebuild 30 miles of railroad from Wallula to Walla Walla, which removes 4,000 truckloads of produce from our roads
- B** Improve Port of Columbia County's rail facilities at Dayton
- C** Upgrades 39 miles of the Walla Walla-Dayton railroad
- D** Begins preparation to relieve traffic problems from Wallula Junction to Walla Walla
- E** Installs message sign and camera near the Blue Bridge to warn of traffic problems ahead
- F** Widens lanes and straightens curves on SR 124 to reduce accidents
- G** Widens lanes and flattens slope on SR 182 to reduce accidents
- H** Adds two more lanes to Highway 12

Stuck in traffic hurts businesses

Washington has one of the highest unemployment rates in the country. Businesses continue to lay off our friends and neighbors. Unfortunately, the economy hasn't shown any signs of recovering soon. It wasn't easy to vote for the transportation budget because I knew this gas tax would impact families. I had to weigh the cost to taxpayers versus the improvement to our economy and the increase of family wage jobs.

A solid transportation package is essential for the economic vitality of Washington. We have to remember that a transportation package isn't about the Eastside vs

the Westside. We are all in this boat together. What affects us most is the difficulty businesses have in transporting goods throughout the state. If we want to improve the economy—if we want businesses to hire people instead of making more layoffs—if we want to improve Washington—we have to start moving traffic again, which is why I voted for the gas tax.

For more than a decade, Washington's population has steadily grown, but our highway infrastructure has failed to keep pace. It was important to make sure that any money raised would go towards the traffic

Continued on back...

...Continued from page 2

problems AND would be used efficiently and effectively. The transportation bills we passed this session guarantee that we will see improvements.

The 10-year transportation package required three things:

1. Accountability improvements
2. Safety changes and congestion relief projects...Only!
3. Tax money used for defined and inclusive projects

In addition, when the bonds are paid off from the tax increase, the 5-cent tax will go away. It isn't permanent.



Sen. Hewitt waves to crowds during the Cinco de Mayo Parade where he discussed two legislative bills moving through the state Legislature.